



## **News Release**

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### **Utah Department of Health's HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care Program Reaches Capacity**

*Applications for Services Suspended as Demand Exceeds Federal Funding*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health's (UDOH) HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care Program, which pays for treatment and care services provided in the community to HIV/AIDS patients, needs additional federal funds just to maintain services at the current level. In order to prevent this unfunded need from getting any larger, the UDOH will stop accepting new applications for the Department's Utah Ryan White AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), Support Services Program and the Health Insurance Continuation Program. This decision is consistent with the recommendation of the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) Advisory Committee, which consists of local health care experts and community advocates for those with HIV/AIDS.

These patient services are funded with a \$3.2 million grant from the federal Health Resources Services Association (HRSA) and the current funding cycle ends in March 2005. Due to both an increased caseload of those who are eligible for the programs as well as an increase in the costs of medications, insurance premiums and medical services, the program is unable to accept additional clients and needs as much as \$800,000 just to maintain services at the current level. Options are being explored by the UDOH to reprioritize the use of existing funds, modify the service package, and secure additional federal funds. While these options are being studied, clients currently enrolled in the AIDS Drug Assistance, Health Insurance and the Supportive Services programs will continue to receive services. As part of this process, the UDOH will review cost-cutting recommendations from the ADAP Advisory Committee and the HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care Planning Committee.

This situation is not unique to Utah. Fourteen other states have had to institute cost-containment strategies and 10 more states are anticipating new and/or additional restrictions to their AIDS Drug Assistance Programs.

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## **Page 2 of 2 – UDOH's HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care Program at Capacity**

Although the number of new HIV/AIDS cases in Utah is declining, the number of people *living* with HIV/AIDS in Utah is increasing. Due to advances in drug treatment, those who are diagnosed with the HIV/AIDS are living longer and needing services longer. There are currently 1,803 people living with HIV/AIDS in Utah; about 750 qualify for some level of Utah's Ryan White Title II services. Services include purchasing medications, paying health insurance premiums for the uninsurable and the underinsured and home health. Some patients also receive vision, dental, emergency housing, substance abuse counseling assistance and other case management services.

"The ongoing goal of these programs is to provide early treatment to extend and improve the lives of those living with HIV/AIDS," says Jennifer Brown, Manager, HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care Program, UDOH. "We have had a strong commitment to serving the needs of this population for the past 14 years and continue to have a strong commitment. It is unfortunate but there is not enough money to serve everyone. If we take new clients we will run out of money before March 2005 and we won't be able to serve anyone."

Clients who currently receive these services and have questions should call their case manager. For those who are not currently enrolled and are unable to access necessary medications, the UDOH may be able to link them to a prescription drug manufacturer's free or reduced program through RxConnect Utah at 1-866-221-0265 or <http://health.utah.gov/rxconnectutah/>.

"These are tough decisions but ones that need to be made. The program needs to be fiscally responsible in order to keep running," Kristen Ries, M.D., Medical Director of Infectious Disease, University of Utah, and member of the ADAP Advisory Committee.

For other HIV/AIDS data and fact sheets on HIV and AIDS, visit the UDOH website at: <http://www.health.utah.gov/els/hivaids/bureau/sp.htm>

**HIV**- Human Immunodeficiency Virus    **AIDS**- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome  
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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*